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The Commonweal

September 21, 1951

Soviet Industrialism

PETER VIERECK

The Church at Assy

ROBERT BARRAT

Death of Michael Collins

FRANCIS DOWNING

Philosopher's Full Burden

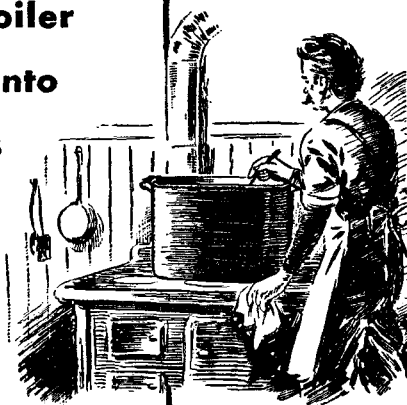
HENRY RAGO

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**The Washboiler
that Grew Into
the World's
Leading
Church
Candle
Factory...**



NINETY-SIX YEARS AGO, young Anton Will and his wife, Rosina, put some beeswax, some candlemaking knowledge and a lot of hope into a washboiler on the kitchen stove. That, in a 10 by 10 kitchen, on a modest side street of Syracuse, N. Y., was the start of the world's leading church-candle factory.

Patiently, Anton and Rosina dipped braided cotton wicks into the melted wax; drew them out to harden, and dipped them over and over again. When the wicks were coated to proper size, they rolled the wax into graceful candles. Candles of pure beeswax. Catholic churches bought them eagerly. Anton and Rosina became the pioneer church candlemakers in America.

Debt, Death and a Widow's Might

Came the day when reputation of the small concern reached New York City. A large buyer there sent an order for a thousand pounds of candles. Anton didn't have all the money to buy that much beeswax. A Syracuse friend came to the rescue and lent him the money.

Then Anton died. Rosina alone, with three small boys to support, carried on. Before long, the boys were busy dipping wicks. And today two of the sons of those boys are officers in the company which ships beeswax products by the millions . . . imports crude beeswax from all continents.

All crude beeswax is tested first by the laboratory . . . graded for various uses, refined, purified and bleached snow-white under the sun. Only the finest, whitest and purest of the refined bleached beeswax is used for the church candles that gave the company its start and its reputation.



Will & Baumer

CANDLE CO. INC.

AMERICA'S PIONEER CHURCH CANDLE MANUFACTURER

SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
MONTREAL LOS ANGELES

CANDLE CRAFTSMEN FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Peace with Germany

AMERICAN efforts to conclude a peace with Germany have been spurred by the happy outcome in San Francisco. A peace of reconciliation has been reached with Japan, thanks in large measure to important figures in both parties. The USSR, trying only halfheartedly to disrupt the proceedings, achieved but little. Forty-nine nations, six of them Asiatic, affixed their signatures to the pact. General MacArthur, Mr. Dulles and Mr. Acheson have won plaudits all round for the key roles they have played.

When it comes to making peace with Germany, difficulties are multiplied. Whereas Japan was virtually under American occupation alone, Germany is split four ways. At present the division between East Germany and West Germany appears unbreakable, while the British, French and American occupiers of the other zones are at odds on certain points. Germany—and the Ruhr—is what the USSR covets most, so that the Kremlin can be counted on to do everything in its considerable power this time to obstruct.

One of the chief unresolved issues is the extent and character of German rearmament, a development which the French and other former victims oppose unless it takes place strictly as a component part of European rearmament. Tightly linked with this is the question of German sovereignty. The demand for restoration of full independence is so strong among West German political leaders, that without it they are opposed to cooperating wholeheartedly in the defense of Europe. Yet the idea of restoring Germany to full sovereignty arouses her neighbors' fears. Trade provides one of the thorniest problems of all, as the revival of competitive national rivalries meshes with disputes about free movement of coal and steel and delays in the Schuman Plan.

Yet six full years after the end of hostilities a way has to be found out of the tangle. The vanquished must once more stand on their own feet and common defenses to meet a new peril must

be firmly established. The aim is to conclude a peace with Western Germany within the next two months.

The general pattern for reaching an acceptable agreement has much to commend it on the practical side. Because of the Eastern Zone the treaty would have to take the form of a contractual agreement between Western Germany and Britain, France and the United States. Except for West Berlin, which would remain under Allied political control, the West Germans would be restored to sovereignty. The Allied High Commission would depart. All that the Allies would retain would be the power to deal with the USSR on matters of German unification and the right to intervene if West Germany were threatened either by communism or fascism.

THERE seems to be agreement all round that some German soldiers should have a part in Western defense plans. In conjunction with this, present occupation troops would become units in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces. An effort would be made to persuade the Germans to support these troops as a contribution to the joint defense effort.

If these difficulties are ironed out and the obstacles transcended in a spirit of mutual confidence and good will, akin to that of most of the proceedings at San Francisco, a working agreement can be reached. In both cases the primary object is to shore up defenses, to restore a power balance that will prevent further aggression and establish peace. To give heart to the defeated and demoralized; to enable Western Germany to surmount such dragweights as her millions of refugees from the satellites and the Eastern zone; to give these peoples in Europe and the Far East a stake in the future, a chance to make a go of things, an important role in the development of their respective continents and in the maintenance of order and justice in the world—all this is a momentous task calling for determination, vision, patience. It is a key to lasting peace.

Frustration in the Senate

SENATOR DOUGLAS, the newspapers reported, "spread his hands in gestures of exasperated frustration, to indicate that he had not been understood, uttered a piercing scream, put his hands against his head and rushed from the chamber." And attendants in the Senate press gallery, some of them with a quarter century service behind them, said that they remembered no comparable incident.

What happened was that Senator Douglas was arguing for a cut in the military appropriations and pointing out that though the supply officers of armed forces were highly patriotic in heart they were subject to grave temptations. Before approving any appropriations bill, Douglas said, Senators should scrutinize carefully, "even though it might expose them to charges which they know to be false but which, nevertheless, may be made."

Then Senator O'Mahoney, in a friendly spirit, said that he could "imagine the words of the Senator from Illinois being sent broadcast behind the Iron Curtain as an indication of a lack of faith that American members of Congress have in the men who fight and who die for them." Senator Douglas misunderstood his colleague, apparently, and it was at this point that he broke down.

Later Senator Douglas returned to the chamber in full control of himself, though somewhat shaken and embarrassed by the incident.

It was in one sense a very trivial thing that happened, a very human thing, wholly understandable. But in a larger context it may be an incident of pointed significance.

Senator Douglas came to the U. S. Senate after a long and successful career in a great university. Perhaps more than most men he learned to value the clear exposition of belief, the healthy exchange of opinion and the advantage of under-

standing and of being understood. For such a man the spirit of the age and especially the tone of recent political debate must be a source of many frustrations. For if there were ever a time when deliberate misunderstandings, half truths, easy accusation, and visceral argumentation gained ascendancy over the more demanding claims of the intellect, the time is now. And we are not thinking solely of the "big lie" countries.

In recent months we have had one example after another of complex events' being simplified by a bogus syllogism, sometimes merely by an oft repeated assertion which was not true in the first place. As an example of this we cite the case nearest at hand. The current issue of a respected Catholic magazine carries a note wherein it is stated baldly, without qualification, that the U. S. State Department turned China from a friendly to a hostile force since 1946. This is said to point up the contrast between the gentlemen of the State Department and General Douglas MacArthur, who 'democratized' Japan during the same years. Thus is the whole China question made easy; a revolution is explained and all the contributing factors taken care of. Mind you, this was no critique of the State Department's handling of the situation in China, which would have been legitimate enough, but the stark statement that the State Department actively installed Communism in the Orient.

Just one example, of course. The papers are full of them and so is much of the argumentation coming from Capitol Hill. Political events of the past are oversimplified until the most complex historical facts are made to look like isolated phenomena. Then they are assigned a single cause and used to partisan advantage. When someone attempts to analyze them and to piece together the pattern of modern history he becomes something of a bore in contrast to the ready-answer boys. A few simple lines is all they need and *voila!* they have explained everything. These oversimplifiers, incidentally, are the ones who are forever calling for investigations and then when they get them withdraw in horror from the complicated mass of evidence that must, by the nature of things, appear in any conscientious attempt to explain the history of the times. They find things are much simpler to explain if words are lifted from context, events lifted from the setting of their times, motives ascribed willy nilly and painful modern history is wholly explained in painless single causes.

But for those who conscientiously attempt to understand and weigh each event, who are de-

• NEXT WEEK •

The burden, the shadow and the illumination of the past upon the present is a dominant theme of Nobel Prize-winning novelist William Faulkner's newest book, *Requiem for a Nun*. Set in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatapha County, Mississippi, the book reaches back a hundred and fifty years in order to comprehend a contemporary murder.

WILLIAM PFAFF reviews the novel in next week's issue.

cently careful about examining words and events in their proper setting, the job of facing the realities of the day is considerably more difficult. Life occasionally seems full of frustrations. There are many who will sympathize with Senator Douglas' momentary discouragement.

A Poser

PROSPERITY ranks high among American objectives for Japan now that a new era of good feeling has been officially instituted. How that nation of 84,000,000 souls, poverty-stricken in natural resources, badly battered by war and defeat, and shorn of empire is to make a go of things is enough to baffle the most practical-minded economist. Whatever hope there is lies in Japan's ability to export, to sell abroad her processed or manufactured goods.

The next question is: To whom is Japan to sell these exports? China appears gone as a major client, while the purchasing power of the masses in such potential markets as South America and Southeast Asia would seem to preclude much promise there. There remain Europe and the United States.

For months now low-price Japanese products have been prominent in American stores. Recently there has been a noticeable jump in American imports of two such disparate commodities as Japanese tuna and Japanese typewriters. Domestic producers are naturally up in arms.

From the San Diego fishing grounds in Southern California come stories of an industry grinding down to a halt; half the costly tuna boats are said to be lying idle, with worse to come. Meanwhile cans of imported and domestic tuna are piling up on the shelves of the nation's chain stores—even though the price per can is currently half of what it was in 1948.

Of all the solutions offered the one most favored by the primary producers is an all-out "educational" campaign that will convince the American housewife of the virtues of canned tuna fish—its flavor, succulence, nutritious qualities and moderate price. Such a drive might do the trick.

What do you do, however, when the commodity in question is the typewriter? That presents an entirely different problem for a national advertising campaign. Would the tactic be to seek to persuade more people that they have writing talents and thereby add materially to the unsolicited manuscripts in circulation? Or should school and college teachers be cultivated to the

point that they require assignments to take typewritten form, thereby adding one more item to the expenses of hard-pressed parents? It is hard to view either course with equanimity.

But tuna and typewriters are only a beginning, and we seem forced to try to have it both ways. A comparatively prosperous Japan requires substantial exports to the United States; yet such imports would inevitably cut into the domestic, if not the foreign, market for our own products. It looks as if plenty of give-and-take and preparatory figuring are called for.

Ya and Nein

IF THE headline and lead sentence of a recent news despatch from Madrid are not misleading (they read: "Unity of Catholics in Politics Urged" and "A call for united political action by Roman Catholics of all countries" respectively), it comes from an appropriate source. For, long before the days of General Franco, Church and State in Spain were intimately linked. One of the peculiar and distinguishing marks of Spanish Catholicism is its reliance upon the "secular arm" together with the parallel support the government enjoys from the Church. One result is complete identification of the two in the minds of the people; in erasing the distinction between God and Caesar the Church in Spain has to suffer the onus of all the callousness, corruption and benightedness of successive monarchs and dictators.

The quotations cited from *Ya* in the American press under the above headline seem innocuous enough. "Political nationalism" has indeed led to mutual distrust and international hatreds. There is also a lot to be said for Catholic scholars from many nations discussing politics at a level "above mere geographical considerations." Out of context it is not even unmistakable in what sense *Ya* asserted that, united, "Catholics could decide the outcome" of political situations.

But the general principle is plain. Catholics are in fact united only in a religious sense. When it comes to politics they might be conservatives or Christian Democrats, distributists or private enterprise, Republicans or Democrats, Labor or Tory, adherents of agrarianism or of mass production. Happily in most countries they are neither the bulwark of the governing regime nor anathema to it. Our only unity is that of conscience—of faith and hope and the charity which is the foundation of human brotherhood because it derives from the love of the Father of us all.

Carthusians in America

The following was written by a Carthusian monk of Milaflores, now stationed at the Sky Farm foundation.

J.C.

IN THE spring of 1950 a gentleman and his wife, very much interested in seeing the Carthusians established in our country, made the Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome. In a private audience they made known their hopes to the Holy Father and visited also the Procurator General of the Carthusians in Rome, the Superior General at the Grande Chartreuse, and the Prior of Milaflores in Burgos, Spain.

Shortly afterwards it was learned that a recent convert wanted to give her estate, Sky Farm, at Whitingham, Vermont, to a contemplative order of men. In some way what had been often talked about in Carthusian circles took on definite shape, and the Superior General sent orders last October to two of his monks to visit the United States and see whether or not the property offered would afford sufficient seclusion for a Carthusian monastery or Charterhouse.

It was decided that it did; and a small group of Carthusians arrived at Sky Farm on Christmas Eve, 1950. From that day the essentials of the Carthusian regime have been lived at Sky Farm. The bell rings at 6:30 P.M. for compline which the choir monks say alone in their cells. At 11 P.M. the bell rings again and the monks rise to recite Matins and Lauds of the Office of Our Lady, each one alone in his cell. At 11:45 P.M. the bell rings again and all go to the chapel to recite Matins and Lauds of the day. This lasts until 1 A.M., or a little later, and then the monks go to their cells to recite Prime of our Lady and her *Missa Sicca*. It is said in union with a Mass going on somewhere on the face of the earth, for the conversion of sinners and unbelievers. This closes the vigil of the night. One rises again at 5:15, says Prime of the day and Tierce of the Blessed Mother, and then devotes himself to mental prayer until the angelus rings at 6:30 A.M.

The Carthusian never gets breakfast at any time of the year. His first meal is his dinner which comes at 10:15, 11:15 or 11:45, according to the season. A light collation is served at 4 o'clock; but from the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in September until Easter the collation is dry bread. Fridays are days of fasting on bread alone. Meat is never allowed under any circumstances; it is forbidden to serve it even to guests. During Advent and Lent, on ember days and certain vigils, eggs, milk and milk products are not allowed. Even if Christmas falls on Friday, eggs and milk products are not allowed.

Once a week there is a recreation on Sundays after dinner. Once a week, also, there is a long walk, lasting as a rule about three or four hours. Conversation is allowed on the walk.

Carthusian life and spirit cannot be well understood without some knowledge of the plan of a Carthusian monastery. The specifically Carthusian feature of every

Charterhouse is the cloister of the choir monks. The doors of the cloister open not into rooms but into little houses, attached to each of which is a little garden about 35 feet square, into which no eye can look except from the house to which it is attached. In the garden the monk can grow whatever he chooses. Some of these gardens are things of great beauty. But they all provide a place of silent prayer.

The hermitages at Milaflores in Spain, for an example, are two-story houses, with stone walls, about three feet thick, built by the father of Isabella the Catholic, who sent Columbus to the United States. The room into which one enters from the cloister is known as the *Ave Maria* because, on entering, the Carthusian goes at once to a prie-dieu and there says an Ave Maria before a picture of the Blessed Virgin. Beyond is a gallery with tiled floor, a kind of sun-porch where one can walk in inclement weather rather than in the garden. A lathe and wood-carving tools are usually provided. Upstairs there are a bedroom and study and a private chapel with an altar and a monastic choir stall.

The Carthusian lives alone in his hermitage. Visiting of one monk with another is not allowed except for serious reasons. The Carthusian does not leave his hermitage except to go to choir or for some special matter about which he should consult one of his superiors. Primarily the Carthusian is a hermit.

It is often said: Suppose everybody went out into the desert and lived a solitary life, what would become of our civilization and our modern world? The answer is clear—there is no danger whatever that anything like this will ever come true. One need but have faint memories of a few glimpses at modern life to be perfectly sure that there is no danger of a stampede from American centers of work and pleasure to the caves and forests and mountains and deserts of our continent. But God does call a few, a very, very few.

Carthusian life is a current of mysticism that has come down to us through the centuries from the Fathers of the Desert. These ancient fathers went out into the desert to be alone with God. They seemed to be so necessary in the outside world in that third and fourth century when Christianity needed missionaries and apologists; and yet God established them in solitude in the deserts of Egypt, that by chanting the psalms they might carry out the function of the Church to give praise and glory to Almighty God, and by prayer and penance gain grace for infidels to see the light, and for martyrs to die in calm fidelity.

God always calls a few to live in time the life of eternity and attain on earth an analogue of that union, knowledge and love of the Infinite Good that in all fullness will burst upon the mind in the beatific vision. But that this analogue of the eternal union may be attained in time, one must seek God in the nakedness of pure poverty and the renunciation of all creatures.

Carthusian cloister and silence make this possible. In entering his hermitage, the Carthusian separates himself from creatures. Cloister prevents his return to the things of the world.

Soviet Industrialism

The Russian brand differs from the American in three ways: total ownership, total planning and total coercion.

By PETER VIERECK

PRO-SOVIET and anti-Soviet propagandists can both quote statistics to prove the success or failure of the Russian five-year plans. Most data available are not objective. They come from the Soviet government. But by reading between the lines, American economic analysts are able to give us, at least partly and relatively, a picture of what is going on.

Any such picture is tentative rather than definitive, owing to the controversial problems involved. American methods of measuring and correcting Soviet statistics include constant cross-references to detect inner inconsistencies and include the first-hand reports of foreign technicians, captured German data, and Soviet deserters to the West.

Soviet Russia is now producing more goods than ever before. This is because of its tremendous increase in industrial equipment and in population. It is not because of any increase in the efficiency of man-hour production, in which the Soviet not only is far behind the West but is behind its own peak of 1937. In that peak year, just before World War II, Soviet man-hour production was 37 percent higher than 1928 in mining and manufacturing, 60 percent higher in transport, 35 percent higher in agriculture. This personal efficiency was apparently not exceeded even by the great gains in output announced in 1951.

Equally interesting is the fact that in two particular industries, forestry and fishing, the man-hour production of 1937 was not above 1928 but 45 percent below. These two industries depend largely on forced convict labor, enormously expanded between those two dates. This shows that slave labor is simply less productive than labor which is even to a small extent free, such as the regimented but not totally enslaved workers of the urban factories.

★

SINCE 1928, there has been a large increase in the Soviet population and a still larger

increase in the Soviet armed forces. The 1928 population was an estimated 152 million, with 0.6 million in the armed forces. The 1940 population was 196 million by census, with 4.5 million armed. The 1946 population, reduced by warfare, was an estimated 191 million, with an estimated 10 million armed. The 1950 population was an estimated 201 million, with 4.5 million armed. This was the same military figure as in that similar period of watchful waiting: the crisis year 1940.

The Soviet brand of industrialism differs economically from the American brand in three ways: ownership, planning, and coercion. In the Soviet, that abstraction known as "the state" owns all industry. In theory "the state" means the masses. In practice it means that small minority who compose the Communist Party, and within that minority the dozen oligarchs of the Politburo, and ultimately one man.

The opposite extreme to such total government ownership would be the total and uncontrolled private ownership known as laissez-faire capitalism. To some extent this existed and thrived during the expanding domestic trade and free international trade of Great Britain and the United States during the mid-Victorian era. Ideally preached by Adam Smith, this laissez-faire system never existed, even in the nineteenth century, in central and eastern Europe. In the 1950's it exists nowhere at all, not even in the so-called capitalist societies of Great Britain and the United States. This is owing to the growth of large-scale industry and monopoly and owing to the controls imposed by the various New Deals, Fair Deals, and labor governments of the West. Therefore, the true contrast is not between total Soviet ownership and western laissez-faire. The contrast is between the coercive total ownership of the Soviet and the freely debated, freely voted mixed-economy of the West.

Our so-called capitalism, which is outproducing its more rigid Soviet rival, is actually neither capitalism nor socialism. It is a flexible, ever-adjusting economy of an underlying capitalism tempered by humanitarian social reforms and by varying degrees of indirect government control and planning.

Some industries, like the post office, are owned by the government throughout the capitalist

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West. Very many industries, especially small-scale production and consumer goods, are totally free. Some (like railroads) are government-owned in some countries of the capitalist West, privately-owned in others, and partly controlled in still others. Many are partly or indirectly government-controlled without being owned. Many are government-subsidized by tariffs or government-bled by high taxes. Some are in a state of private or public monopoly; others are divided among fierce competitors. In so complex and fluctuating a situation, political power often alternates between parties tending toward capitalist free enterprise and parties tending toward greater socialization.

★

SUPPOSE a housing plant is buying its metal from a steel plant. In the Soviet economy both plants have the same owner: the Communist Party or the so-called "state." Therefore, the amount and price of steel sold is determined not by free bargaining and the capitalist laws of supply and demand but by a prior and compulsory government plan. This requires not only the over-all five-year plans but hundreds of thousands of short-run separate plans for each industry. This necessitates the most enormous bureaucracy in history, immeasurably greater than even the swollen bureaucracies of modern England and America.

This Soviet bureaucracy is the new ruling class. It cannot be resisted from below by strikes or by opposition parties. It pays itself disproportionate salaries and a larger percentage of worldly goods than western capitalists receive in profits. The gap in standard of living and in political power between a Soviet commissar and his regimented laborers is far greater than between an American millionaire and his self-organized trade-union workingmen. The power of the commissar, who can have strikers and free trade-unionists shot down as traitors, resembles not the dream of the socialist idealists but the extreme fulfillment of the wildest dreams of an omnipotent monopoly-capitalist.

Communist propaganda contrasts this system with the alleged chaos of an allegedly "unplanned" capitalism. Capitalism, even of the extinct laissez-faire variety, equally depends on planning. But planning in the West, even in a partly controlled or mixed economy, depends upon the free choice and partly free enterprise of thousands of individual planners. Though sacrificing some degree of security to free initiative, this flexible system has so far outproduced the Soviet laborers, who have neither freedom nor even real security.

Capitalist planning—for example, by an auto

manufacturer—is mainly determined by the consumer, although during a war crisis the government will certainly step in to control excessive use of vital raw materials. Soviet planning is determined entirely by government needs. These are often in complete variance with consumer needs and preferences. Consumers in any country want shoes, clothing, housing, and food. The Soviet government instead wants heavy industry, machinery, and armaments—and plans accordingly. No wonder even the poorest countries of the consumer-minded West have a far higher standard of living than the Soviet Union. For example, Soviet housing averages one family per room, with the floor space in each room divided between its several sleeping occupants.

★

THE coercive industrial planning of the five-year plans began in 1928. Significantly that year still remains the peak of individual prosperity under the Soviet regime. Never again has that peak been equalled. What made it a peak was the preceding "New Economic Policy." This NEP interlude, to which Soviet survivors still look back with nostalgia, partly resembled the western economy in giving more attention to consumer demands. Since 1928, the Soviet gain in industrial goods has been enormous (although ever behind American industrial gains). But per capita production of many key consumer goods went down after 1928 to pay for these gains.

The National Bureau of Economic Research reported on May 28, 1951 that in 1929 a mere 5 percent of the population had 34 percent of America's wealth while by 1951 that rich 5 percent had only 18 percent of the wealth. This peaceful social revolution toward equality, which is achieving more than any violent anti-capitalist revolution, is increasing annually. In 1929, 1 percent of the population had 19.1 percent of the wealth. By 1951 this dropped to 7.7 percent, about two-thirds of the way to financial equality. Or to take a longer view: between 1850 and 1950, the standard of living in real wages (making due allowance for inflation and price-rises) rose 350 percent for the American worker. And this for just about half as many hours of work per week!

In contrast, in Soviet Russia class lines are steadily tightening. An ever greater share of the national income and power is going to that tiny, neo-feudal oligarchy (only 6 percent of the population) known as the Communist Party. Hence, the naively wise reply of the old, simple Soviet peasant when asked if his village contained many Communists: "Good heavens, no; we are all poor down here."

savage battle between the two Secret Services, fought out without mercy in the darkness." Such a man can be a hero to a very few, because the work he has to do can be known to very few.

★

MEN like Michael Collins disturb us, even when their work is known to us. The romantic land is almost always a dishonest land. As I wrote in my piece about West Point, most men, all the romantics, prefer the undisturbing comfort of the legend. Collins had to assign men to track and kill specific persons. The romantics prefer the knowledge of the anonymous dead. Leaders whose responsibility cannot be so specifically defined—as Collins' had to be—do not engage us or themselves in the difficulty of ethical ambivalence.

One can admire the artistry of Frank O'Connor—he is essentially a story teller—as he reports on what happened when Collins' men broke into the room of some Englishman: "A young head fell back upon the pillow, and a red stain spread about it. The portrait of a girl continued to smile from the dressing table." Mr. O'Connor would not boggle at it had he written it in one of his short stories. Nor would we.

But he knows here what it is he is about, and what Collins was about—Collins whose "genius was the genius of realism"? Of him Mr. O'Connor can say: "It is as a realist Collins will be remembered, and as a realist he should be an inspiration to the new Ireland." But there remains that young Britisher, and the red stain about the pillow—about how many pillows? Mr. O'Connor is bothered about it, as are we.

DeValera was not bothered about it. He could disclaim responsibility and even knowledge. He could agonize over a sentence, watch civil war emerge over his dispute about words and the symbols of words. He could make, or help make, the Treaty, which Collins signed with the British, "no longer a matter of disagreement; it was a test of orthodoxy. One was at liberty to call Collins and the others traitors." He could lead Lilliput which, as Frank O'Connor puts it, "waited [during the Treaty debate] outside the door in the shape of a deputation re the censorship of films and the circulation of objectionable newspapers." He did not protest against nor much differ from "the Ireland which had black-guarded Synge, scoffed at books, believed it was all settled in the Penny Catechism." Or, rather, to the extent of his difference he was silent. Of him, rightly, Mr. O'Connor says that the Irish "had chosen unawares an extraordinary character, perhaps the most extraordinary character the Revolution threw up." Even for an artist given to condensing his material that sounds like understatement.

But Collins moved in a world defined largely by the British, a world, too, of touts and Irish informers, made famous for us by Liam O'Flaherty. So that Mr. O'Connor is driven to say: "Parliaments may say who shall govern openly; they may not say who shall govern in secret; they may not even know . . . the creeds of Moses,

Mohammed, Christ and Buddha are all alike indebted to this underworld which knows no God and no morality, and makes a mockery of all our fantasies. It is the ultimate realism."

Before this all moral judgment falters. Caught in its physical operation the prior judgment of the chaplain halts, and waits to be supplied with understanding. The historian pauses; he is without Lord Acton's confidence in the moral splendor of his absolutes.

★

COLLINS had ideals but they were not abstract. His idealism was burning and constant, but it was obscured by a certain roughness of habit, if not of temperament. Moreover, he was capable of an almost astounding suppression of his emotions. His letters seem to disclose a man accepting the death of his dearest friends. He accepted these deaths, as he accepted death. But they are wrong who gather the impression that he was unmoved by them. To a nation almost intoxicated by years of rhetoric, where words had long since passed for deeds, Michael Collins was an anomaly.

It may be said that he was not defeated by a gun but by the unfrocked casuists. "Faced with the superior motives of a Mellows or Valera, he was at a disadvantage; clumsy, blundering, giving an impression of disingenuousness; for men and women are notoriously nasty, and abstract principles tenuous and pure, and they live and die austere if they can be said to live or die at all."

This beautifully and even austere written story of Collins is not a burning incense before a man-made god. Mr. O'Connor is aware of the defects of Collins and he writes them out. He portrays Collins as blundering, baffled and distraught at the repudiation of the Treaty which he helped negotiate. The agility and the changing positions of DeValera confused him. He was in a world, now in Ireland, in which he could not successfully operate. In part this was true because of the division which produced the Civil War, and of it Mr. O'Connor says: "The split, which was now handsomely underway, was Collins' peculiar tragedy and one which was a constant menace to his mental make-up. He did not understand the irremediable."

But that Michael Collins touched the life of his people with honesty and with magic and magnificence is clear. It would seem to be a law of all revolutions that they must have their Thermidors. But it is seldom that the revolutionist is either willing to make peace, or, being willing, knows how. But Collins was much more than a revolutionist. All the testimony indicates that he was an extraordinary administrator. When Frank O'Connor speaks of him, as he does often, as a "genius" the mind is incapable of refusing assent.

Somebody, I do not know who, prepared an ambush for him. "The countryside he had seen in dreams, the people he had loved, the tradition which had been his inspiration—they had risen in the falling light and struck him dead."

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Death of Michael Collins

DEATH, and the act and the fact of dying, have never troubled me. Only when I am in an airplane do I think that I might die. Even then I am less concerned with the fact than with the manner. For only in a plane does it occur to one that he might be extinguished in flames; and of that I have had a dread all of my life.

Julian Green has said, in a wholly different connection, that "my greatest sin will have been not to accept *la condition humaine*." Not to accept death seems to me a participation in that kind of sin. For the fact is that, even physically, we die a little every day.

But the death of some men—even in this age of mass slaughter—makes a difference. So that the light on the day they die is diminished. It is almost not too much to say that the light remains diminished forever. How much the light has been turned down it is always impossible to measure. For there is no way by which one can tell what a man would have done, who has suddenly been denied the doing of it. Besides, there is the danger of reading history with Carlyle as being "the essence of innumerable biographies." Yet even if one accepts as true the dictum of Napoleon that "if I had not come, another would have come in my place," it is difficult not to conclude that Lenin's life was not nastily meaningful, that the history of the Catholic Church is not different because, at a given time, Pius IX lived and reigned, that England's poetically famous graveyard contains at least "one Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood."

One knows what the Rome of Nero or of Caligula was like. He does not know what it would have been like if both of them had been strangled at birth. No one can tell how different the United States would have been had Lincoln lived. History in the absence of evidence is an old wives tale.

Yet the mind fastens on the fact of the heroic dead. And the mind weeps for the death of some because of the magisterial quality of their lives. Suddenly to have cut off those lives is to supply history with mystery so long as men will live. The life of Michael Collins, cut down in ambushed Ireland, becomes forever part of the stuff of endless wonder and speculation.

★

I HAD wanted to write about Frank O'Connor. And so I had gone to the public library, in this little New England town in which I was born and in which I am now writing, in order to review his book of stories called *Guests of the Nation*. The library, offensively enough,

did not have it. But I found his *Death in Dublin*, which I had never read.

If you have grown to manhood in the kind of home in which I was raised, you have led an historically ambivalent life. The Irish emigrant of my father's generation left half his heart in Ireland. Who it was who opposed England made little difference to him. It seems to have made little difference to those who remained at home—hence the Civil War and the death of Michael Collins.

Wolfe Tone, Emmet and Parnell were more familiar names to me than the names of the American revolutionists. Around the name of Parnell much of my early admiration was gathered; around the names of his betrayers much of my hatred. I had grown to manhood before I could calmly read about Gladstone: it had hardly occurred to me that he had done anything else save help destroy Parnell. A thin and fervid boy, I had spoken on New England platforms with DeValeraites. DeValera was more to me than was Woodrow Wilson who, now I think of it, correctly defined my father as a "hyphenated American." If Albion was "perfidious" to me it was small wonder. If my judgments for long had their birth in my pulse beats that fact does not astound me even now.

Thus many of the things Frank O'Connor writes about in *Death in Dublin* invoked my immediate assent. Some of the things required the slow revolution of judgments and values which were, at best, the rags of sentiment and prejudice which one shoves in the cracks of doors and broken windows of his house and, thus, keeps maudlin-warm against the draft and cold of fact. For *Death in Dublin* is the story of Michael Collins.

His story cannot be the story of DeValera. But it was DeValera whom we uncritically knew in America, whose escape from jail we, and he, had properly made heroic. Through him, in him, the image which the Irish soul had carried had become incarnate: there *was* an Irish Republic, it had a President, and he was it. We hardly knew of Michael Collins at all. DeValera was hardly given to unfurling any banner save his own. DeValera, in America at any rate, was a living symbol, and symbols are often preferable to the things they are said to represent. They attract the sentimental, and it was, says Mr. O'Connor, "the old sentimentalism against which Collins almost unconsciously strove." Whatever be the final judgment on DeValera, it could never be said of Collins what Mr. O'Connor has said of Sean MacDermott: "Some simplicity of life or thought had given him the mysterious power of swaying man; he was a Pied Piper who lured men after him, and to this day they cannot tell what tune he played."

But the kind of war that Ireland had to make against the English was not, and could not be, a war fought in bright sunlight in the streets by men who followed pennons bravely brilliant in the noonday sun. That was not the kind of novelists' war Collins conducted. Collins, because he knew he had to be, was in charge of an underground; secret, silent, obscure. The fact is that Collins was the intelligent and ubiquitous head of a secret service. As Mr. O'Connor says, "Open warfare changed into a

for the door of the tabernacle, Lurçat for an immense tapestry.

The result, it must be said, is quite extraordinary. It is indeed unique to find in the present day such a conjunction of masters of living art collaborating in the creation of a single project. Simply from a secular point of view, a visit to Assy would be as rewarding as one to a museum of modern art. But it seems to me that from a religious point of view the work is no less worthy. Let me then try to make you see that church.

★

IN THESE mountainous regions man's view is often cut off; from a distance all that is visible is the high bell-tower of green granite, which stands at one side. It is necessary to reach the avenue which leads to the structure to make out the church proper. It then looks like a large alpine chalet, with its form of a flattened triangle; the two slopes of the roof go down to the ground in order to conserve in wintertime a protective covering of snow.

Eight massive columns of rough stone support the forward part of the roof and protect the great peristyle on the façade on which stand forth, in their luminous lightness, Léger's panels in mosaic.

"Mystical Rose—Morning Star—Tower of David—Mirror of Justice—Arc of the Covenant," the litany of the Blessed Virgin is spelled out according to a very simple design in which blues, reds, greens, gold, black and white interplay. An impression of tender joy and of strength emanate from the conjunction of this powerful colonnade with the mosaic at the center of which shines forth, in a very stylized manner, the beautiful countenance of a woman.

When you enter the chapel there is somewhat the same impression, more intimate, more recollected. Your eyes are immediately drawn beyond the colored semi-darkness of the nave toward the cupola of light which is the byzantine choir with the immense tapestry by Lurçat which adorns its upper part. It tells of the combat between Woman and the Dragon—the woman clothed with the sun of whom Saint John speaks in his Apocalypse. I think that visitors who are not believers must be astonished by the somewhat esoteric symbolism of this work.

From the openings made in the round vaulting, and decorated with little squares of color, light falls on the great stone of the simple altar (Mass is celebrated facing the people) and on the semi-circular gallery of pillars of clear marble. The choir thus forms an open space in which the mystery can be unfolded in full light and toward which all eyes naturally converge.

The nave, as I have said, is steeped in a semi-darkness in which the waxed pews of clear chestnut glow faintly (another happy innovation considering the ugly prie-dieu, stock-fixture of our churches in France) as does the surface of the marble. A mystical and colored half-light, for the sun penetrates here only through the panes of the stained-glass windows which are very modern in inspiration and made up of warm color tones. They

call the attention of the sick people who come to pray here to the lives of all the saints who themselves were ill or cured the sick: Saint Thérèse, Saint Vincent de Paul, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, Saints Francis de Sales, Louis, Francis of Assisi. . . .

Turning around you are struck dumb with religious admiration before the four windows of Georges Rouault which adorn the wall of the façade. It is then possible to perceive to what degree Rouault's art attains its full and complete meaning and success in stained glass. There are four panels scarcely larger than an ordinary canvas but the rays of the sun dance and are caught in new colors from second to second. Two scenes from the Passion and two bouquets of which texts of Isaias express the spiritual sense: "He opened not His mouth—He was bruised and wounded." These four masterpieces, as well as an extraordinary Veronica in an adjacent chapel by the exactness of their colors express abandonment and suffering but also peace.

I was going to forget the two panels of Bonnard and Matisse over the side altars at the end of the two lower sides. At the left side altar—that of the Blessed Sacrament—Matisse has painted on a sunny background a St. Dominic in extremely simple black lines surrounded by graceful branches. This same altar has the bronze door which Braque designed for the tabernacle and which represents a fish and spikes of wheat surmounted by the greek word *Ichthus*.

★

MY GENERAL impression of this church? I am all for it. Not for intellectual reasons or because we must automatically encourage every effort to get away from outmoded routines and traditions. But because the Church at Assy represents an authentic religious and aesthetic success. Of course there may be imperfections of detail. Lurçat's tapestry is a little too mercurial. The panel by Matisse is given too much importance—or rather this may be said of the place accorded to Saint Dominic on this altar of the Blessed Sacrament. A few windows in the lower tiers are not perfect. And perhaps these artists could have achieved greater harmony if they had done a certain amount of work together; a master artist was lacking and the ensemble can be reproached for being a little too diffuse.

But that is comparatively unimportant. Visiting this church I was reminded of what Henri Matisse said to me about his church at Vence: "In general, churches say to me 'Brother, you must die.' As for me, I want to build a church which says 'Brother, you must live,' death itself being considered a new form of life. . . ."

And I also remember that sentence of Nietzsche's: "I would have greater belief in Christianity if Christians had more of an air of being saved." The church at Assy seems to have been built by men who believe they were saved, truly expressing good tidings of confidence in the here below and hope of eternal salvation in the hereafter.

ROBERT BARRAT.

The Church at Assy

A RECENT incident revived the periodic controversies which engage the Catholic intelligentsia in this country on the subject of religious art. On the complaint of a certain number of the faithful the episcopal authority has had removed from the church of Assy a crucifix by Germaine Richier which, they assert, would give permanent scandal. Today the crucifix is in the entrance vestibule of the rectory. I saw it there not so long ago myself.

It is obvious that the good rank and file of the parish, accustomed as they are to the art which we dub with the name of Saint Sulpice (the quarter in Paris equivalent to Barclay Street in New York), must have recoiled at that strange tormented work of art in which the Body of Our Lord resembles a dead tree rather than a human form. I understand how people who are ignorant of modern art might be scandalized. But it seems difficult for me to deny that this work of art has an authentic religious value—which is more than can be said for nine-tenths of the statues that usually adorn our sanctuaries.

What surprises me somewhat in this new dispute, I must admit, is that it took place at Assy which has won a well-merited reputation for its courage in artistic matters.

But perhaps my American readers have not heard about that stirring artistic experiment. I do not know if there is anything like it in the United States. What I remember of American churches is their unmistakable atmosphere of propriety but also their banality. It seems that every effort has been made to imitate the Gothic, a form of expression which no doubt appealed to the esthetic sensibilities of the men of the Middle Ages, but hardly to our own. But American churches are kept in good repair, their atmosphere is devout and they are not yet too cluttered up with artistic horrors.

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THE same cannot be said, alas, for the churches of France, whether they are in the country or the city—except those which are designated as historic monuments and are kept up by the Beaux-Arts. In their poor taste the faithful have for generations been amassing statues of a frightful sort—Joan of Arc with her flags, Saint Michael felling the dragon, Saint Thérèse surrounded by lilies and roses. Then there are the rococo and hideous Ways of the Cross, tapestries, vases, artificial flowers, various objects that a second-hand dealer at all concerned about the future of his business would

refuse to have around. With a few rare exceptions the average parish lives and prays amidst the mawkish ugliness of the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

Religious art in the West has been constantly on the decline since the Romanesque period; it is enough just to compare some Romanesque chapel in the Auvergne with the gigantic hodge-podge baroque basilicas of Fourvières at Lyon or Sacré-Coeur at Paris.

But in this domain as in many others, brave men have for a number of years been taking the initiative, and we are now witnessing in France an extraordinary effort to reconcile religious art with living contemporary art. This effort is bound to benefit both the Church and the artists. The latter because, cut off from the people for many years, they rarely have a chance to create for living communities. Their works are being buried in the homes of wealthy art-lovers or financial speculators. Or if their works are hung in museums they soon become museum pieces. Hence the rebellious individualism of contemporary art.

It will also benefit the Church because it is essential for her to adapt herself in her modes of expression to the nations and times in which she lives and breathes. The church at Assy will certainly be accounted—along with the chapel by Matisse at Vence—among the most wholehearted efforts to create a modern religious art.

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ASSY is a place where consumptives go to be cured. It is a rather narrow plateau which dominates, at the height of three thousand feet, the admirable valley of Haute-Savoie, which rises from Sallanches and Megève to the large Alpine glaciers around Chamonix at the foot of Mont-Blanc.

In the winter crowds of skiers gaily skim down the broad snowy slopes. In summertime they are followed by mountain-climbers with heavy nailed boots, alpine sticks and tyrolean shorts. The air is remarkable for its purity and everything about the countryside is calm and on a grand scale.

On the plateaus at the base of the mountains a number of sanatoriums have been established since the first World War. That is how an abbé, himself formerly afflicted with the disease and later a chaplain of one of the sanatoriums, saw that little by little in the woods and fields of the plateau such numbers of sick people, attendants and doctors were coming to live that he thought it would be useful, and indeed necessary, to build a church and establish a parish there.

That was in 1937. Many of those who were ill told him of their desire to be able to pray in appropriately beautiful surroundings. And the idea came to him to get away from conventional styles and to create a truly new type of church adapted to the extraordinary landscape which would surround it. He asked an architect of the region to draw up plans for a church high in the mountains. Then he went to Rouault and Bazaine for stained glass windows, Bonnard and Matisse for decorative panels, Fernand Léger for a mosaic façade, Braque

The Screen

JES' KEEPS ROLLING ALONG

THE most amazing thing about "*The River*," an extraordinarily fine picture produced by Ken McDowd in India, is its sense of timelessness. Frequently movies try to achieve this universal feeling of something happening not necessarily now or yesterday, but always, yet seldom have films been so successfully pervaded with an aura of life going on and on no matter what. "*The River*" has many assets all of which contribute to its remarkable atmosphere of continuity, and their listing here is not in order of importance. It was filmed entirely in West Bengal, India, along the banks of the Ganges, and it uses its unusual setting well, integrating it into the story. This story itself is unusual for its simplicity and its casual lack of drama as we know it, but its forceful inclusion of the drama of life with first love and death and birth and everyday living as its components.

It is to Director Jean Renoir's credit that he was able to fuse the setting (with its many aspects that add to the mystery of the unknown) with themes that are as familiar as everyday existence but are taken out of the mundane by the beauty of their expression in the script and visuals. On this script Renoir collaborated with Rumer Godden, who practically rewrote her original story of *The River* and has turned out a masterpiece of film writing. Although Miss Godden's script achieves lyrical heights, it is by no means just another extravagance of arty poetry. While I was greatly enthusiastic about former films made from Godden novels, "*Black Narcissus*" and "*Enchantment*" (based on *Take Three Tenses*) I find "*The River*" the most successful of the lot; all three, however, are outstanding cinema fare for thinking audiences.

Perhaps another advantage of "*The River*" that increases its paradox of unfamiliar realism is its cast of comparatively unknown actors who have been so brilliantly directed by Jean Renoir. The plot is involved with many people: an English family who live along the banks of the Ganges, whose father (Esmond Knight) is foreman at the jute press, whose mother (Nora Swinburne) is soon to have another baby, whose six children are very active; and their neighbors, a widower (Arthur Shields) at peace with the world but worried about his half-caste daughter and his visiting, unhappy American cousin (Thomas E. Breen). Three girls, making their first movie appearance, occupy our attention: Patricia Walters as the 14-year-old daughter of the English family; she is running away from childhood towards love and she hopes to be a writer when she grows up; Adrienne Corri, who looks like a Rossetti heroine, but acts like a calculating vixen; and Radha as the neighbor's lovely daughter whose mixed heritage and first years of womanhood have left her confused as she

searches for her place in life. All three of these girls fall in love with the visiting American who, uprooted by the war and bitter about his wooden leg ("Yesterday's hero only a man with one leg") is also searching for the meaning of life.

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WHAT happens to these people when they come in contact with the wisdom of India on the banks of the River is fascinating to watch. Among the picture's many visual highlights (the whole is stunningly photographed in Technicolor) are the inclusion of several Indian festivals and ceremonies: the Diwali with its millions of lights symbolic of lives given in the battle between good and evil, and the Kali Puja with its worship of the Goddess of destruction and creation. Perhaps even more effective for its beauty is the visualization of a story written by the adolescent girl to attract the handsome young American. This story danced by Radha includes the marriage rites of the gods and is breathtaking in its colorful imagery.

But the event in the film that brings to a climax the relationships of this group of people is the most striking of all. The small son of the English family tries to charm a cobra and is killed. The tragedy is followed by the somber funeral, and it is then that each person realizes the inevitability of life and death. Except for the sentimental twaddle spouted by Arthur Shields that we should celebrate that a child died a child, the sequences built up around this period of sadness are the most moving in the film and draw to a focal point all the other counter-punctual dramas of the whole picture. "With everything that happens to you; with everyone you meet who is important to you, you die a little bit or are born."

"*The River*" is a good example of international co-operation in film making. Its producer is American; his staff is English, American and Indian, and so is the cast. The technical equipment, which came from the United States and England, was manned by experts from all three countries. Rumer Godden is English; and Director Jean Renoir is French.

It is presumptuous to congratulate the makers of a fine movie like "*The River*" on the mistakes that were not made—yet when the three young girls were in jealous conflict in their efforts to attract the unhappy American, I was fearful lest romance should take over and the whole piece drift into the so-called happy ending, which in this case would be most unhappy. But the makers of "*The River*" knew where they were going; the solution does not end in a smug clinch. The American and the three girls have helped each other through their difficult period. The boy leaves, and later when he writes to the three girls, we see them anxiously reading and then slowly dropping the three letters as they hear cries from the house—the first cries of the newborn baby in the English family. The River runs on.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Stage

LACE ON HER PETTICOAT

AIMEE STUART'S play, imported from London, is an extremely tedious trifle having to do with the caste system of the 1890's and its effect upon the friendship of two little girls. I suppose the materials might have been daring and even significant had they been treated by Tom Robertson or Henry Arthur Jones from the same point of view; the present author's liberalism, however, seems squandered on an out-of-date villain, and the suggestion that the problems of one period have meaningful overtones for another is never brought sufficiently into focus to be worth arguing about. It is conceivable that London, under a precarious Labor government, might find something relevant in the play. Here, however, its interest is at best theoretical—it had the unfortunate effect upon me of making the landed caste of 1890 Scotland seem somehow more productive of social virtue than the American-bred financial caste which has replaced it—and I felt that another ten minutes of it would have driven me, unquestioning, into the arms of T. S. Eliot.

In part, this is director Herman Shumlin's fault. Mr. Shumlin is a man who learned very early in his career that authority is everything, or nearly everything, in the theatre. His directing style has become the firmest of the firm, the most deliberate I know. As such, it is still well suited to a play—like "The Little Foxes" or "The Corn Is Green"—in which the lines are charged with enough melodramatic or emotional intensity to be worth hammering home, syllable by syllable. But when this anvil-stroke technique, with unconscionable pauses between strokes, is applied to a routine thriller like last season's "The High Ground" or to the thin, and rather dainty, piece under consideration here, the effect is numbing. The most girlish exchanges are made portentous beyond belief, the simplest question-and-answer passage is painfully divided by breathless stage-waits. By the time the play has got around to a climax and we are ready to be moved by it, we—and the director's devices—are exhausted. At this point, Mr. Shumlin can only do what he has been doing all evening *twice* as emphatically, and the sense of technical strain during the play's emotional crises is unbearable. I will bet that the same play, without cutting, ran twenty minutes shorter in London. This may also be one reason why it ran longer.

Mr. Shumlin has assembled a capable company, though he has made them all speak in the same stresses. Neva Patterson is very attractive as the mother of one of the girls, Muriel Aked first-rate as the girl's grandmother, and Perlita Neilson and Patsy Bruder suggest that they might have been quite moving as the young friends, had they not been encouraged to play their moments together as though each was a variation on the tower scene from "Mary of Scotland." (*At the Booth*)

WALTER KERR.

Of Note

Religion-Science Question

A RECENT issue of *The Catholic Herald* (67 Fleet St., London, E.C.4) summed up a reader's-page controversy in an editorial. This is an excerpt.

Unfortunately, it is not easy for the human mind to exercise habitually that delicacy of perception and that tolerance which are absolutely necessary if the general principles of the mutual relationship between religion and science are to be continuously applied in detail. The scientist, in the pride of his discoveries and encouraged by the apparent finality of his proofs, disregards the necessary balancing factor of faith. The religious man, certain of the truths he professes, brushes aside, and sometimes secretly fears, the neat and apparently unanswerable facts of science.

This difficulty has been well illustrated in a long correspondence on evolution which has occupied the letter page of this newspaper.

Let us take a sentence which appears this week in the letter of distinguished non-Catholic contributor, Mr. H. Shelton. He writes: "What I have been trying to tell Catholics is that Catholic Philosophy, like all other philosophy, must be fitted to the facts of science."

The sentence is so ambiguous and capable of so many possible interpretations that it is quite impossible to discover the writer's real meaning.

If he means that nothing can falsify a demonstrated fact of science, of course he is right, and this is a truth which Catholics should remember.

The final truths of science are God's truths, just as much as any others, and indeed were it not for the discipline to the human mind which God's order of truth, God's law, at the material level of His creation, affords, religion itself would very soon deteriorate into a kind of extravagant, self-centered illuminism and escape from reality which would be the worst of perversions. This indeed has often happened, and it is one of the glories of Christianity that its philosophy is rooted in the Natural Law which includes all that is discoverable by man's natural powers.

But if Mr. Shelton means, as we fear he does in the context, that what man knows of himself as a spiritual being, of the order of values, of the Good, the True, the Beautiful, of the ultimate Reality, of God and His relation to man and the world (however that knowledge is reached, whether by Revelation, the illumination of Grace, reason, tradition, conscience) must be reconsidered in the light of the material discoveries of science, he is

making exactly the same mistake as the atheist doctor who denies the existence of the soul because his scalpel cannot dissect it.

To leap, for example, from the scientific evolutionary hypotheses, themselves very far indeed from *proved* scientific findings in any strict sense of the word, to the simple assertion that man was evolved from a monkey is to betray a complete ignorance both of the nature of the spiritual order and of the material limitations of science.

But, as Professor Sherwood Taylor aptly reminded us in a recent letter, we Catholics can become guilty of an analogous confusion of mind if we fear, and therefore unscientifically deny, the facts of science or even idly condemn its reasonable hypotheses, as though these *could* legitimately affect the truths of revelation and the spiritual order.

First Steps

THE current *Interracial Review* (20 Vesey Street, New York 7) carries an anonymous article called "Black Priest," which appeared originally in *The Priest* of Huntington, Ind. Here are the concluding paragraphs.

A friend in the South, a priest of the white race, recently wrote and asked me what I thought could be done in the way of an apostolate for the Negro. He told me of a Negro couple who showed interest in Catholicism, and whom he had invited to attend his church, but who refused for obvious reasons.

I suggested that the first step should be to get all these people to come to Mass at his church. They should first learn that the Catholic Church is the Church of Christ, and that the color of one's skin is not an impediment to salvation. Only in this way can they get over the false notion that the Catholic Church is a white man's Church. My same friend expressed amazement that there exists a Catholic Negro who comes from Fontenelle, and that this Catholic Negro is soon (God willing) to be ordained a priest. As I look back over my life, I, too, am amazed. The way has not been easy. I have been sold by friends that I must really have a vocation, since I have had so many injustices inflicted upon me by Catholics. Others say they don't see how I stand it.

I have no intention of giving up my vocation or of leaving the Church, simply because I learned long that this is not a "white man's Church," that I am just as welcome as anybody else, that this is my Church, that the salvation of my soul is desired just as much as the next man's. Perhaps I haven't really suffered yet. Perhaps my fellow-members of the Mystical Body will make it a hundred times more difficult for me, but, by the grace of God, I shall go ahead, bearing ever in mind the words of our Blessed Lord, "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly."

If everyone were ideally good, would government be necessary?

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The Philosopher's Full Burden

By HENRY RAGO

ELISEO VIVAS is a complete, unabashed intellectual, of such example that he helps us to understand the term "intellectual" and to purify it of unwholesome associations. The activity of the mind is for him not a function which grinds down the human complexity into an inhuman simplicity; it labors with the full load; it takes account and is accountable; no elegance of "system" will blind it to the realities which resist formula, however dark and Dostoevskian those realities might be. For a man so engaged, nothing can happen to his mind without happening, lightly or terribly, to him; and nothing can happen to him without happening to his mind. To see this completeness of intellectual life is to know that it does not cheat the passions, it moves by passion; it does not violate experience, it is the adept of experience. Vivas is a thorough intellectual in the sense that he will not allow the intellectual life to end anywhere else but where it begins.

Thus his book *The Moral and the Ethical Life* (University of Chicago Press. \$6) is something more than a treatise. It is in its own way the rehearsal of a career, a dialectic in the true sense of something really gone through. It takes the reader as Eliseo Vivas himself has gone, through the various "naturalistic" explanations of the moral life to his present position: that moral values are "objective" and that among these values "the absolute primacy" goes to "the espoused value of the other as person."

★

IN THIS spirit the introduction to his book deplors the academicism into which so much of American philosophy has fallen. The criticism is not cheap. It appreciates the analysts of texts and the specialized critics for the lessons they have taught us—and where these lessons have not been learned, we can suppose that they absolutely have to be—but it reminds the reader again and again that the destiny of the moral philosopher is beyond these lessons. "*The subject matter of moral philosophy is not language, nor its exclusive end clarity.*" So too the "Animadversions," in which the author undertakes a series of criticisms of incomplete solutions to the problem of morality, the recurring appeal is to the fullness and complexity of the living man in a range of experience far beyond the limits of the "naturalistic" formula:

... For man, the actual actor of the moral drama, as we have come to know him through the efforts of poets and sages, is a complex, burdened,

pitiful, and wonderful creature. He may be the paragon of animals, of noble reason and of infinite faculty; in action he may be like an angel and in apprehension like a god; but he is also a petulant thinking reed and a hopeless mess. He is in love with life but also hates it deeply and subtly. He is capable of crime and sin but also has a tyrannical and whimsical conscience that tortures him for trivial misdemeanors as brutally as it punishes him for unpardonable sins. Narcissistic, he hates himself; full of insufferable vanity, he seeks to humiliate himself; the victim of systematic self-deception, he is capable of unsparing self-knowledge. But, above all, in what he wants he is hopeless, confused, vague, self-deceived, inconsistent, and divided. Nothing, I suspect, would give him a worse sense of misery and of guilt than letting him have all that he wants. In any case it would take an Augustine, a Freud, a Dostoevski, a Kierkegaard, and a Shakespeare, aided by a Boas and a Machiavelli, pooling their several talents and techniques, to split open the secret heart of this contemptible lump of living clay and extract its wonderful essence.

The core of this book is the author's own effort to explain the source and direction of "moral" and "ethical" life. He sees the problem as twofold. First, we must understand how the individual asserts a government, in any given case, over the vast number of conflicting interests and impulses within himself. This is the purely "moral" problem, Vivas says, using a refinement of the term suggested by Bergson. We solve this problem in the interest of making the self into a "person," by choosing the independently existing good. In a sense, "The good chooses us through the effect of its requiredness upon us, which we merely acknowledge."

Paradoxically, the choosing is at the same time our own, in that we are free to apply or not to apply the law which we thus discover. When a man does choose and espouse values, "he does so freely, and through the act of free choices he exercises his freedom and creates his own moral nature." Thus: "When a man resolves a moral perplexity successfully, he adds a cubit to his stature." The objectivity of the good preserves this ethic from the vulgarity of Self-Fulfilment. The same objectivity precludes any facile notion of continuous progress in the moral self by successive and complete transformations of personal values in every right decision: Vivas affirms that the "essential values" which constitute the person persist at every stage, and in their name there are often sacrifices, retrenchments, and reversals.

★

THIS complexity becomes more apparent when we approach the author's next great question, the "ethical" problem. This is the special name which Vivas preserves for any question of conduct involving the possible interests of others. Here we have an abyss which the theory of the moral self, as Vivas conceives it, cannot leap. There must be a new value, beyond the values of personal

HENRY RAGO teaches literature and philosophy in the Humanities Program at the University of Chicago.

integrity; and this Vivas finds to be the recognition of the "other" as a person in the exact sense that he is inviolable. In any conflict between my own interest and another's, *"I can keep the moral process open, without giving up my integrity, when I effectively and actually put as the keystone of my value arch one value to which I give absolute primacy: the espoused value of the other as person."*

It is to be noticed that the view is far from sentimental. Vivas tells us that he has no reverence for mere "protoplasmic activity." The reverence here is for a "right to submit a moral claim"; the protection is for a "personality," a moral constitution, which might otherwise be threatened. Love without this hard value is meaningless. To love all men and to despise what they love is to love an "abstraction."

★

THERE is no pretense that the problem of the conduct of life ends here. Even with his careful balancing of the "ethical" with the "moral," the author sees that the ethical looks toward another world. "The ethical insight detaches us from our moral espousals, from our worldly loyalties, and turns us toward the sources of our freedom and the goal of our salvation. But this—which points the way in which the ethical transcends itself and becomes the religious—is a subject for another essay."

This suggestion of "another essay," whether on that problem or in a greater depth of the present problem, is something good to hear. This is no idle compliment. I say it for at least two large reasons. For one thing, this book stirs to new movement too many important questions to let either the author or the reader rest. Chiefly, I am interested to see whether Vivas will regard as absolute and definitive his separation of the "moral" from the "ethical."

Are there, perhaps, subterranean connections, whereby the distinction, having served a kind of provisional use, might be dissolved? Vivas is not unaware of Augustine's *Ama et fac quod vis*. Can it be that the "personality" he seeks is a paradox at its roots, a teleology toward the Other, even in the "moral" life? Can I really say *I* without saying *Thou*?

To suggest another approach to the same question, Vivas, who knows D. H. Lawrence as well as anyone knows him, might find a new use for an old subject here. Possibly too he might make his peace with Freud, irrespective of Freud's large intent, as he reflects on the implications of the theory of narcissism and regression for an "other-directed" morality.

Finally I should like to see what relationship he might find between two significant occasions in his book: one, in the section on the moral life, in which he appeals to a special sense of the term "personality"; and the other, in the section on the ethical life, where he must rest the claims of others upon their dignity as "persons" and on nothing else.

An underlying principle seems to unite the two "lives" here: obviously I am thinking of Maritain's development of the distinction between the individual and

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Waldemar Gurian, who has just returned to
this country after six months of research as
chairman of the Committee of International
Relations at the University of Notre Dame.

the person, a conception which gives new vitality to Aristotle's insight that man is essentially a political animal. Vivas' phrase about keeping the moral process "open" struck me as interesting language: in the classical distinction it is as individuals that we are closed upon ourselves and our residual "matter"; it is as persons that we are open to the transcendental, to the society of man and of God, and it is here that we have our true being and our true identity.

★

A SECOND reason why one wants to see more of Vivas' speculations is that there simply is not very much of this kind of fresh enterprise going on in America at the moment. In philosophy as in literature, we seem to have no end of exact and scrupulous criticism; its high value is obvious, but its price is correspondingly high. A heavy Alexandrianism depresses us all; it makes the young men old, and the old too distracted for serenity and wisdom. I leave it to others to say how much of it is the curse of the epistemological question, which cannot be wished away, and how much of it is the substitution of intellectual *activity* for intellectual life.

In any case, the present book reveals a personally possessed mind personally concerned with actuality. And it is at its best when its author has done with his "Animadversions," and when at last he is on his own, thinking his way through his problems, putting not only his intelligence but his sensibility to the task. In the clear air of speculation, where he has the freedom of his own resources, his very language gains a new clarity and gusto.

The point is not that these are interesting terms in which to have philosophy: these are the *only* terms. Philosophy gives itself only and always in new terms; as the problem, to be a real problem, must be new, no matter how ancient the tradition which forces it again to the surface; as even what is old in philosophy must be renewed by—to use a Greek word—wonder.

The new, in this sense, is important not because it is new but because it is genuine: it comes of the direct address of mind to object. Whether for a St. Thomas ("Nihil in intellectu nisi primum in sensu") or for a Dewey (whatever fault Vivas finds in him, his perseverance with the actual is one of the salutary examples of our age), this aliveness to the real is the humblest requirement of the philosopher and his final honor.

"I look out of my window and I see a boy-and-dog world." I have never forgotten this sentence of Father Leo R. Ward's, nor his entire lesson of extraordinary patience with the ordinary. The sentence tells us how the true philosopher begins and what he endlessly must be faithful to. If Eliseo Vivas' exploration of nature beyond "naturalism" takes us to a more anguished "region where vague moving shapes are hard to identify" and a graduate student's insistence might "frighten the shadowy quarries," the allegiance is preserved; and even in that darkness the philosopher will be recognized.

Books

Truth in the Night. Michael McLaverty. Macmillan. \$3.

READING the quietly powerful, vivid, masterfully indirect work of Michael McLaverty makes one nostalgic for the traditional fictional literature of our language. Let us face it—we have in our country many brilliant and capable journalistic novelists, but you can count on your fingers the number who are stylists of the first rank. Over here, the presses are omnivorous and impatient, the money is waiting, and most of us, readers and writers alike, will give little time to the savoring of style.

Style is the man, is it? Phooey! It is the arduous study of traditional life and traditional literature; it is the eternal patience of the craftsman and a passion for perfection. Truly, temperament, background and freedom from economic anxiety make for a congenial atmosphere in which an easy, controlled, crystalline narrative style can be developed. Nonetheless the achievement of a definite, exhilarating style is a prodigious feat of work—whether it be mastered by a simple schoolmaster in Belfast or by a member of the landed gentry across the Irish Sea.

When McLaverty writes about the land, the sea of Ireland, and the people, he has few peers. For simplicity, concreteness and vividness how many have better described the outgoing tide:

"The tide was going out fast: it was going out from the sand leaving shreds of froth like half-melted frost; it was going out clear and green over the tumbled masses of white rock; going out from the low shore at the back of the pier and slithering through heaps of sea rods stripped like bone; and farther to the south it was withdrawing from the black cliffs, slipping over their gables of shadow, falling with a suck over the glossy boulders and hissing softly through the foliage of rooted wrack."

In this, his fifth novel concerned with the small but universal compass

of Irish simplefolk, in city and in rural village, McLaverty explores the effect of a comely shrew's spitefulness upon herself, her meek second husband, her child Mary and a group of first-marriage in-laws.

Vera, who fled the squalor of the city across the bay for the monotonous provincialism of the island, is furiously obsessed with her child's future social and economic welfare. Escape from the island is her fixation in the mistaken belief of so many humans that a change of geography brings a solution to the problems of the soul.

The island becomes more of a prison when she falls in love again and marries Martin Gallagher, who has wandered and returned, who knows many truths in the night and lives temperately with them, though they be sweet or sour.

Despite the indulgence of her husband and her in-laws, Vera hops from anxiety to anxiety, ultimately bringing tragedy to herself and child.

Vera reaps what she sows, in her bristling inability to content herself with circumstances. Yet it is in the quiet, strong, descriptive excellence of McLaverty's craft that traditional wisdom is given fresh, new meaning.

JOE DEVER.

Randolph of Roanoke. Russell Kirk. University of Chicago Press. \$3.

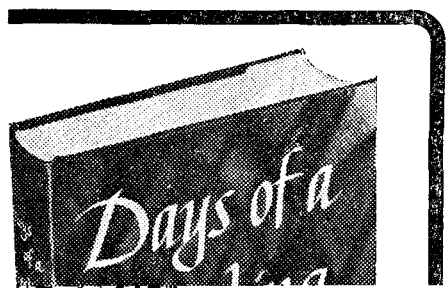
MR. KIRK is becoming widely known as a brilliant young scholar in the history of political theory, particularly that of England and America. He is on the staff of Michigan State College and this year, with aid of a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, is working on a book to be called *The Conservatives' Rout*, a study of Edmund Burke. His short essays have established him as a growing master of English prose style, clear, flexible, forceful. He is also a Christian, an Anglo-Catholic by conversion and conviction.

This admirable volume is his first full-length production. It is subtitled "A Study in Conservative Thought."

Kirk is not concerned with the minutiae of John Randolph's life. This is no attempt to supplant the biography by William Cabell Bruce or to correct the one by Hugh Garland. Kirk does indeed present a vivid picture of the old war-horse of Southern Conservatism, but this is incidental. The author's concern is to trace Randolph's political ideas, to show how consistently and courageously from 1799, when he entered Congress, to 1829, when he retired from it, and to his death four years later, he stood for the republican principles on which our country was founded; to retell how he contended against the egalitarian and coercive practices which destroyed and replaced those early principles.

Kirk knows as well as Randolph did that, for good or ill, America has repudiated the theory of government which the founding fathers had in mind. The Constitution has been manipulated by loose constructions and judicial interpretations into something which would have horrified those who drew it up, even Jefferson. The central government has today almost unlimited and anonymous power. It overrides individual rights and local loyalties and peculiarities. It subordinates the states into little more than divisions on a map. By exercise of the taxing power it dominates all people, all affairs. We are thus reduced to a uniformity of culture which is conducive to mediocrity and which invites control by bargaining consolidations of promotional capitalists and massed laborers, neither of which thinks of us as citizens in any sense of the word that would be recognized by the founding fathers. Americans still have an illusion of individual freedom; but in fact we have become the servants of a mass-man motivated more often by dicker-ing greeds than by any principles whatever.

This at least would be the way that contemporary America would look to Randolph of Roanoke if he were alive. He would know that his worst dreads had come to realization. He has become outmoded, but to dis-



agree with *Demos*, as Kirk points out, need not necessarily be to err. The consequences of dissent may be unpleasant but the dissenter may possibly have the truth with him.

"Although Randolph's sovereign states have been beaten down at one time and bribed into submission at another; although every economic

been published heretofore. The notes are thorough and accurate. There is a discriminating "select bibliography."

We may well be grateful to Kirk for this more than competent reminder of the man, largely forgotten, who more than any other of his time stood for the liberty of individuals, localities and states; who fought all policies, the tariff, foreign wars and

Cinderella of Europe. Sheila M. O'Callaghan. *Philosophical Library.* \$3.75.

BEFORE one gets halfway through the book he is wondering whether Miss O'Callaghan really was as much absorbed in defending Franco Spain as she was in castigating the British socialist experiment. Every Spanish subject seems to lead to a caustic paragraph on Bevin *et al.* She snaps back to Spain quickly but before long is back again in England, almost as if she were being pushed violently back and forth.

Miss O'Callaghan starts her work with a laborious account of Spain in the days of the republic, its anarchy, its corruption, its unfit leaders. She portrays the Republic as a travesty of democracy. The only things that save her introduction, factual as it might be, though almost pointedly undocumented, is her humor and ability to concoct pungent phases utilizing that humor. Needless to say, the account is liberally inter-

persed with references to British socialism.

After explaining to her satisfaction, and supposedly to that of the reader, that Franco's rule is one of freedom, cut to the measure of the papal social encyclicals, Miss O'Callaghan gives us for dessert an analysis of the Spanish people. They are, she maintains, essentially dictators, each and every one of them, with no qualifications for picking a government or intelligently criticizing the one they have.

The only evidence of dictatorship in the government, according to Miss O'Callaghan, despite her defense of it and her castigation of popular democracy, is point four of the Falangist Twenty-six Points: "... we shall see to it that a military view of life shall shape Spanish existence."

This opinion on actual existence of dictatorship follows closely on the admission that all Cortes-passed legislation must go to Franco for approval. If he turns it down, that's that.

There is some value in the de-

tailed explanation of the social improvement laws and their workings, done in popular style, different from the usual ponderous and complex writing found in other works.

All in all, scarcely an important book, though it could have been.

WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN.

Starset and Sunrise. Nicholas Sandys. Sheed & Ward. \$2.50.

THIS is the story of Marjorie Chatham. Marjorie cares for only two things: to be in the movies and to enjoy "guys." Her incarceration in a school conducted by nuns for delinquent girls seems to be designed to thwart her entirely. But Marjorie has drive. She has no inconvenient feelings of gratitude, nor does she have a conscience. Her heart is about the size of a dessicated pea. When a wealthy widow spends money freely to make a home for her and her illegitimate child she scorns the woman for being an old softie. It is easier to give away her baby and pursue her double objective.

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One of her early discoveries is that she can use "guys" as stepping stones to a place in the movies. She promptly marries Ben Slyme, a revolting, damp, porcine, gluttonous director, for whom she feels only contempt. But he can boost her into big pictures. A first cousin to Moll Flanders and Madame Bovary, she passes from man to man, shrewdly appraising each for what he can give her.

But Marjorie is converted. Given the role of Thérèse of Lisieux, she sets out to discover how the young Carmelite lived and felt. Her change of heart moves parallel to the experience of a great human love, which is without the slightest sexual interest. Under the warm wing of this love we leave her dying of tuberculosis, which she contracted while trying to ascertain how it feels to be as cold as was the Little Flower in winter.

Starset and Sunrise is a first novel by a young Englishman living in Wales. He has chosen to let Marjorie tell her own story—a device with both merits and drawbacks. Appropriate to Marjorie's character is not only the style but a skimpiness of detail which suggests her shallowness. The same under-writing prevents her account of her many affairs with men from ever being even slightly pornographic. When Marjorie experiences change of heart, however, the poverty of detail is unpersuasive. Remarkable accident is freely substituted for the slow development of character from within the protagonist.

Sandys has drawn freely on his considerable experience as an actor for the rich background of this novel. One of its merits is the satisfying subtlety with which his own contempt for the politics, strut, and false grandeur of the movies shines through Marjorie's enthusiastic account.

SISTER MARIELLA GABLE.

Cracks in the Kremlin Wall. Edward Crankshaw. Viking. \$3.50.

THIS book is an attempt to place the USSR in a true perspective. Mr. Crankshaw's thesis, to cite it very simply, is that most people of the West are victims of their own

fears in supposing the Soviet Union to be an enemy of immeasurable strength and cunning. He believes that ideologically, and perhaps otherwise, it is an enemy, but an enemy with motives different from those generally ascribed.

Like some other students of contemporary Russia, Mr. Crankshaw stresses the historic continuity of Russian policy. He thinks it is not Marxism but Russianism that is threatening the Western democracies; or, to put it in his own language: "We are faced no longer with a hostile group of Bolsheviks who happen to be Russians, but with a hostile group of Russians who happen to be Bolsheviks."

If we wish to understand Lenin, for example, we must take into account not only that he was a born materialist and conspirator but also that he was "a born Russian." This factor of national character he seems to regard as the most important in the equation, but there are others which go to explain the complexity of the Soviet government's behavior. One of them is the supreme difficulty of keeping the Soviet Union, with its economic backwardness, its political history and ethnic composition, together as a going political concern. Another is the prevalent fear of Western attack or of "capitalist encirclement."

The Soviet rulers of Russia have responded to this situation with a policy which is a compound of the peculiarly Russian intuition of reality, of Marxist dogma, and of simple gangster tactics. The result has been a course highly devious, often contradictory, and very far from anything like a master plan carried out over the years. Mr. Crankshaw rejects the notion that Russia is, in any active sense, embarked upon world conquest as incompatible with Stalin's realism.

I am inclined to think that this is only another fairly good report on Russia by an historian and journalist who has spent time in Moscow. Mr. Crankshaw's analysis of the Russian character rings true, and one may feel profited by this part of the report. But his affirmation that there are cracks in the Kremlin wall because Russian foreign policy (and

domestic policy too) is filled with contradictions doesn't say a great deal. Would not an analysis of British or American foreign policy over the past fifteen years show precisely the same thing?

The net effect of *Cracks in the Kremlin Wall* is to make the leaders of the Soviet Union look like human beings—albeit Russian human beings—and that is a proper corrective to the kind of thing we have been getting from less informed sources.

RICHARD M. WEAVER.

• REVIEWERS •

JOE DEVER is a novelist and short-story writer whose home is in Boston.

REV. BERNARD IDINGS BELL is an Episcopal clergyman who serves as a student counselor at the University of Chicago.

WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN is a midwestern Catholic journalist.

SISTER MARIELLA GABLE, O.S.B. of the College of St. Benedict, Minnesota, is the editor of three collections of short stories.

RICHARD M. WEAVER is the author of *Ideas Have Consequences*.

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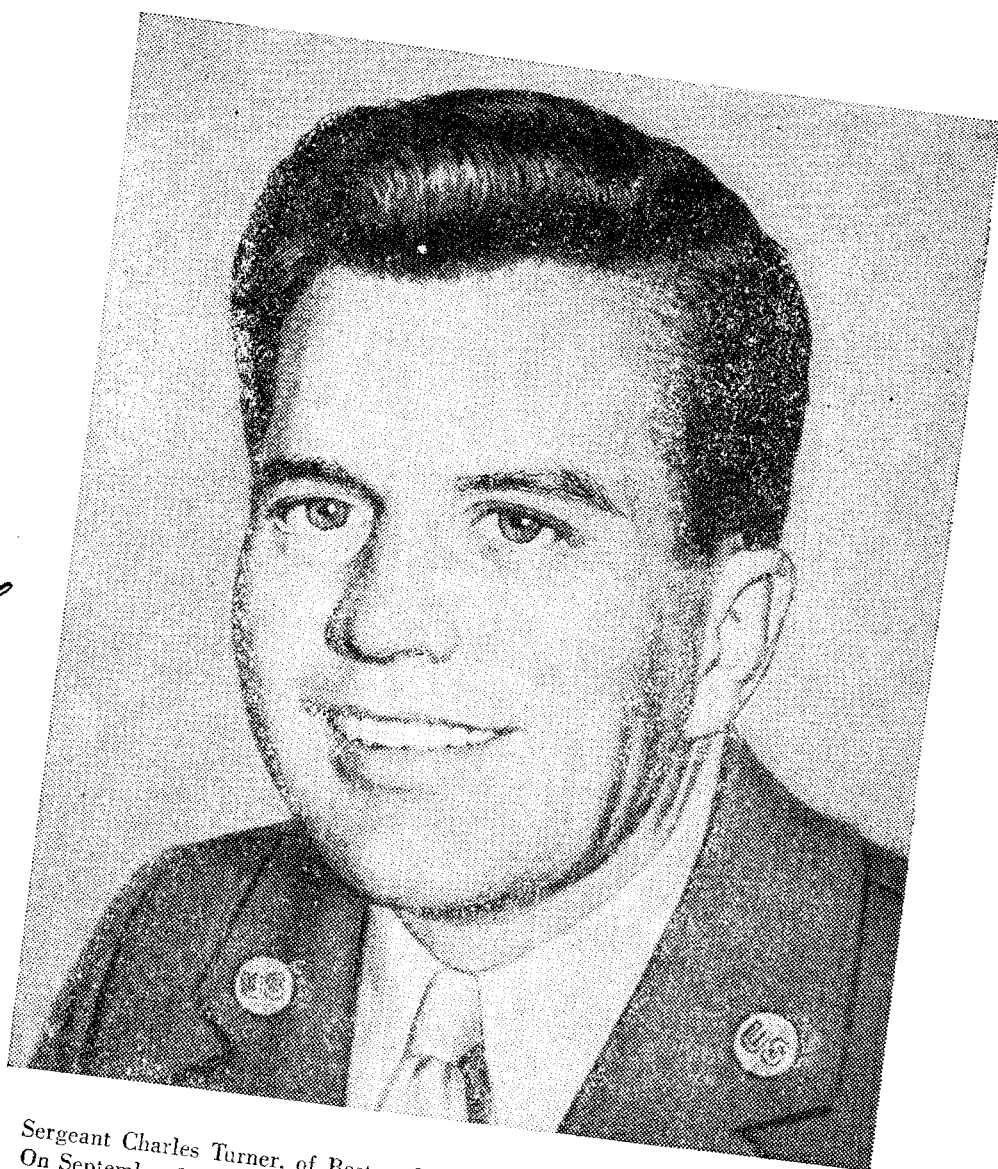
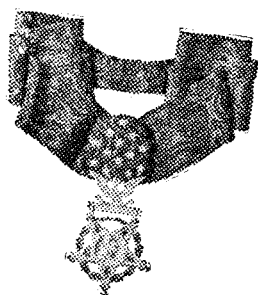
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